DISASTERS

SUPPLEMENT No. 2 ON SUMA

SUMA Reports Help Decision Makers Manage Information

One of the most essential elements of management in the aftermath of an emergency, and specifically in handling relief supplies, is the ability to manage information. This information allows administrators to take appropriate decisions in the assignment and distribution of resources.

The aim of SUMA, the Supply Management Project, is to provide a flexible tool for sorting and inventorying large amounts of supplies in a short period of time. It is meant to provide relief managers greater control over what supplies are being sent and who is sending them. One of the most important features of the SUMA system is the ability to produce reports regarding incoming supplies. Based on the information contained in the database, reports can be tailored to a variety of user requirements:

- *Consolidated consignment*
- *Medicaments by category*
- *Non-medicament supplies*
- *Unsorted supplies*

The report of *consolidated consignments* gives an overall picture of donations received, and is of particular importance to the administrator responsible for advising donors as to the status of their shipments. It is used to report the source, value, and type of shipment, and the date when the shipment was delivered.

The basic features of the *medicaments by category* report include specification of therapeutic subcategory, fonm of administration, expiration date of the medicines received, and whether or not the supplies have been delivered.

The reports on *non-medicament supplies* include categories of water and environmental health; food and beverages; shelter, housing, electrical and construction supplies; logistics and administration; and personal needs.

During an emergency, a good part of the supplies received are materials that arc not class ified, such as different types of food, clothing, medicines, etc. While these items may bc useful, it is often not possible to sort and distribute thcm in a short period of time. The report for *unsorted supplies* gives general information about the type of supply, general subcategory, the number of pieces and weight, date of registry, destination, general observations, and whether the items were distributed.

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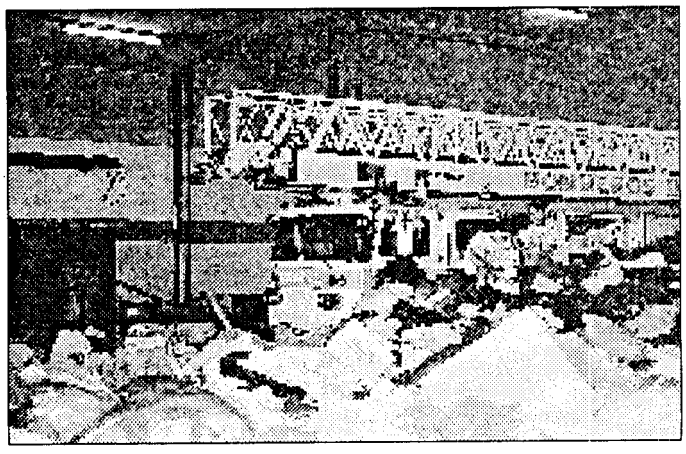


If *you* don't manage supplies, they will manage you. Here, a pile-up of unsorted supplies blocks a fire engine at a supply collection site.

Reports . . .

A report on non-medical supplies was reproduced in the July issue of the newsletter. Below is a sample of a *consolidated consignment report* that shows the source, value, type, and reception point for supplies received in a country following a tropical storm.

SUPPLY MANAGEMENT PROJECT FOLLOWING DISASTERS
SUMA

SAMPLE SAMPLE

CONSOLIDATED CONSIGNMENT

Parameters
From Date (DD/MM/YY) 4/5/93
To Date (l) D/MM/YY) 4/8/93
Place of Origin . . . . . All
Addressee . . . . . All
Category . . . . . All
Subcategory . . . . . All
Item . . . . . All

Place of Origin : Country X
Place and date : City X 04/05/93
Type/Name of disaster: Tropical Storm

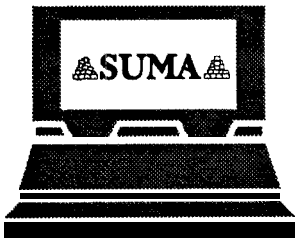
Date (DD/MM/YY) : 04/06/93
Time : 15:55:28

Does not include shipments not consigned through SUMA

01-Medicines 02-Water and Environmental Health 03-Health 04-Food 05-Shelter/Housing/Electric 06-Logistics/Administration 07-Personal Needs 08-Non Classified

Registry	Place of Origin	Origin	Addressee	Estimated Total Cost	:USD 01	02	03	04	05	06	O?	08	Reception Place	Delivered	Consigns
4/5/93	COUNTRY X	COMMUNITY BUSINESS	MINISTRY OF HEALTH	(NOT AVAILABLE)	0	YES	---	---	---	---	---	---	PREHOSPITAL MEDICINE AREA	/ / -	001001
4/5/93	COUNTRY A	RED CROSS	RED CROSS	$10,000	0	------	---	---	---	---	---	YES	SOCIAL SECURITY	04/0$/93	002001
4/6/93	COUNTRY X	COMMUNITY BUSINESS	CIVIL DEFENCE	$25,000	0	------	---	YES	---	---	YES	---	SOCIAL SECUTIRY	/ / -	002002
4/6/93	COUNTRY x	TELEVISION STATION	MINISTRY OF HEALTH	$ 3,000	0	------	---	YES	---	---	---	---	FLOATING	04/0[1/93	002003
4/7/93	COUNTRY B	NED CROSS	RED moss	$50,000	0	YES	YES	YES	---	---	---	---	GENERAL HOSPITAL	04/07/93	003001
4/7/93	COUNTRY A	LULAC	GOVERNMENT OF COUNTRY	X$ 20,000	0	------	YES	---	---	---	YES	---	AIRPORT	04/07/93	003002
4/8/93	COUNTRY c	GOVERNMENT OF COUNTRY C	GOVERNMENT OF COUNTRY X	(NOT AVAILABLE)	0	------	---	---	YES	YES	------		CENTRAL WAREHOUSE	04/0[1 /93	003003
4/8/93	COUNTRY c	NEo moss	RED CROSS	$12,000	0	YES	---	---	---	YES	YES	---	AIRPORT	04/0[1 /93	003004

Release of New SUMA Software Planned—User Suggestions Welcomed!



Users have provided dozens of valuable suggestions and comments as to how the SUMA system can be improved. On the basis of these comments, the SUMA Project software development team will begin designing version 4.2 of the SUMA System software. The new version, scheduled to be released in time for the 1994 hurricane season, will have additional modular functions which will allow easier delivery of urgently needed supplies. The software will retain the same "look and feel" of version 4.1, so users will not have to learn a new program.

Feedback from users is one of SUMA's greatest assets, and many ideas may be included in version 4.2. Please send suggestions to the SUMA Project Development Team c/o Emergency Preparedness Program, PAHO/WHO, 525 23rd St., NW, Washington, D.C. 200317, USA; Fax: (202) 775-4578.

What to Expect from SUMA in 1994

In addition to developing the new release, version 4.2, the SUMA project software, the following are planned in 1994:

- The software is presently available in Spanish, English, and French—manuals are available in Spanish andl English. Translation of the manuals into French is planned, and a Portuguese version of the software should be ready in 1994.
- A SUMA Team Operations Manual is in development. It will feature technical sections on radio communications, generators, and more, to assist team members at a disaster site.
- Subject to funding, a new SUMA Project product has been proposed to assist users in warehouse management and the distribution of relief supplies. The distribution module would share information with the SUMA databases and be supported by its own technical manuals and training. Together, these modules would form a comprehensive relief supplies management system—from port of entry, to warehouse, to the victim of a disaster.

SUMA Training-1993

During the first half of 1993, 394 participants from 28 countries in the Region attended courses at the following levels:

- *SUMA I*—a one-day course that introduces senior ministry or administrative staff to the goals and scope of the SUMA Project.
- *SUMA II*—an intensive three-day course for prospective SUMA team members. Participants are drawn from the professional level and receive training in the SUMA system's software, policies and procedures. A simulation exercise is held the final day of the SUMA II training. It has proven popular and effective for the country hosting the course to provide consignments of unsorted relief supplies for the simulation. At the end of the exercise the host government receives an inventoried list of relief supplies.
- *SUMA III* is a three-day course for those identified in SUMA II as potential SUMA team leaders. Emphasis is placed on operational management of the SUMA team and on the SUMA CENTRAL software module.

The creation and strengthening of national SUMA teams will continue to be the focus of activities in 1994. Team leader trainings will be held in countries with the interest and ability to assist neighboring countries in SUMA team response and training.

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The System Behind the Software: SUMA Teams Rely on Paper When the Going Gets Tough

Imagine that a disaster strikes your country. The response is gathering momentum, and you know that relief supplies are on the way—whether you're ready or not. However, electrical power is out and emergency generators are not available—no power, no computers, no SUMA team, right?

This might be the scenario if the SUMA system existed only on a floppy disk. But the logic and procedures built into the software have been captured in a paper-based system that allows the SUMA team to record vital information and deliver urgently needed supplies immediately, and to enter the information into the database later.

The SUMA Inventory/Delivery Form was originally created to serve as a back-up during power outages. The form uses the same categories as the SUMA System software. It has been found that even when power is available and the computers are functioning, SUMA teams can capture data faster by writing down information about the consignments first on the SID form, then passing the form to the person entering the data into the computer. This has the added benefit of creating a "hard copy" record of the incoming consignments.

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SUMA Project Steering Committee

The first meeting of the SUMA Project Steering Committee was held 25 August 1993 at PAHO Headquarters in Washington, D.C. Steering Committee members were selected from regional and international organizations for their broad experience in disaster management and their shared vision of the valuable role automation can play in managing relief supplies. The mission of the Steering Committee is to provide ongoing guidance to the SUMA Project regarding direction, policy, and goals.

The following individuals attended the meeting:

Ms. Marianne Buschmann, DHA/NY
Dr. James Cobey, Health Volunteers Overseas, USA
Mr. Jeremy Collymore, CDERA, Barbados
Dr. Rodolfo McDonald, Guatemala
Dr. Guillermo Rueda Montaña, Colombian Red Cross
Dr. Juan Pablo Sarmiento, Colombian Red Cross

Members recognized that in order to decentralize the management of the SUMA system, subregional points of contact should be identified who would serve as models for other national SUMA teams, and function as bases for regional response. PAHO's involvement. would be to provide technical support for the national programs.

It was also suggested that each participating country should designate an institution responsible for the SUMA Project. The national agencies responsible for the SUMA Project might differ from country to country, but the leading agency would have a multi- sectoral responsibility.

Governments or relief agencies may request copies of the SUMA software (available in English, Spanish, and French) and manual (English and Spanish) by writing to:

Emergency Preparedness and Disaster Relief Coordination Program • Pan American Health Organization

525 Twenty-third Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20037, USA; fax: 202-775-4578

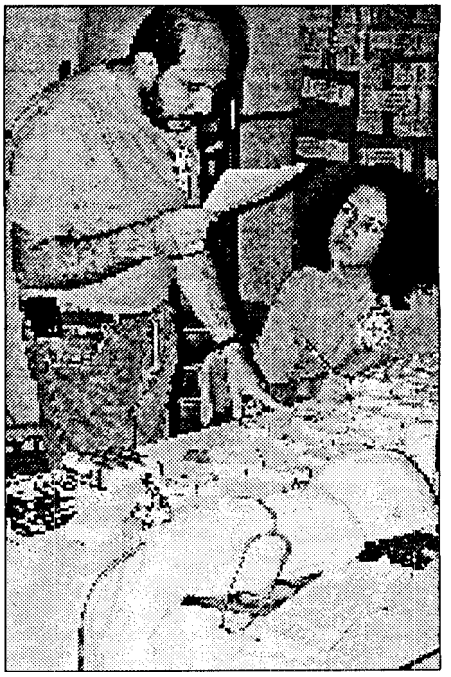
SUMA in Venezuela

In early August, Tropical Storm Bret passed through the Eastern Caribbean, causing serious property damage in Trinidad and Tobago,' before it hit Caracas with full force on 8 August 1993. According to Venezuelan officials, the heavy rain and wind precipitated mudslides in slums on the perimeter of the capital, causing the death of 77 persons. The storm claimed another 22 lives in neighboring Miranda and Aragua states. At least 400 were injured and thousands were left homeless.

As the storm gained strength, a regional SUMA team was placed on alert in the Caribbean, and another was alerted in Costa Rica in case the western Caribbean or Central American countries were affected. Within 72 hours of Bret's hitting Caracas, a SUMA team in Venezuela was mobilized, made up of members from the Venezuelan Red Cross., the Fire Brigade of the Federal District of Caracas, the Ministry of Health and Social Services, and the National Civil Defense Institute. SUMA team leaders from PAHO's Costa Rica Office also traveled to Caracas.

SUMA Central—the focal point of the system-was set up in the principal station of the Caracas Fire Brigade, which was the main collection point for relief supplies. Terminals were also activated at other fire stations in the city where medicines, food, and other supplies were being collected. A terminal was on standby in case international relief supplies began to arrive at the airport.

The SUMA team was able to make major progress in classifying; and sorting what all too quickly became a mountain of supplies. Team members reported that the reports generated were particularly useful when decisions on distribution had to be taken.



Venezuela's SUMA taam sorta medicines by established categories. Those needing urgent distribution are so marked.
(Photo: Acosta, PAHO/WHO)

UNHCR and PAHO Discuss a Comprehensive Relief Supply System

The United Nations High Commission for Refugees has developed a Commodity Tracking System (CTS) for logistics support in emergency operations, in longer-term programs, and in supply and transport management at UNHCR Headquarters.

The key functions of CTS are:

- Pipeline tracking, which provides advanced information on what relief supplies are arriving
- Warehouse management
- Convoy planning/loading
- Reporting on distribution
- Reporting to donors

Representatives from UNHCR's Field Software Development Unit, the SUMA 'Project, Médecins saris Frontières, the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance, and Volunteers in Technical Assistance (VITA) met in August in Washington to discuss the future of relief supplies management. The participants explored areas of potential cooperation between UNHCR and PAHO in developing a comprehensive relief supplies management system with international {applications.

Where CTS is used, UNHCR controls all phases of relief supplies management, including transportation, warehousing, and distribution. This makes it useful in situations such as in the former Yugoslavia—a slow onset emergency where the national distribution system has ceased to function.

The SUMA system, on the other hand, was created to allow countries to manage their own relief supplies following a sudden onset disaster. A comprehensive relief supplies system could combine the tracking feature of CTS and the flexibility and "user-friendliness" of the SUMA System. ❑